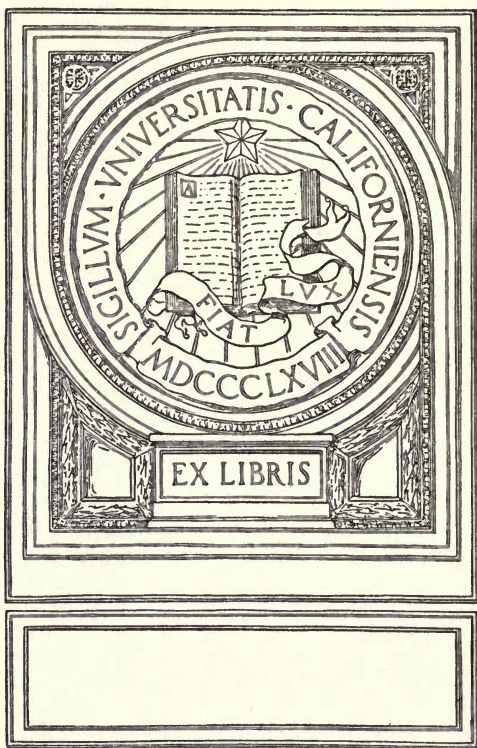
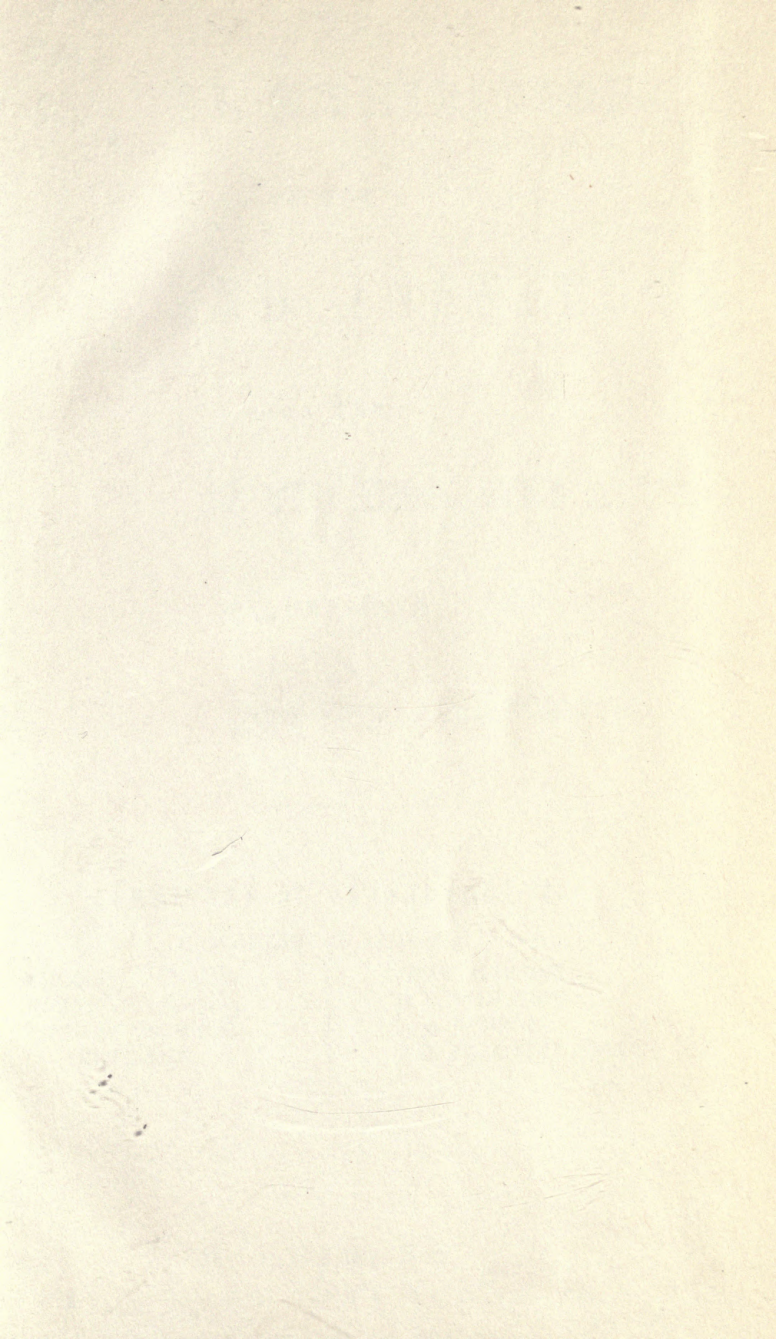


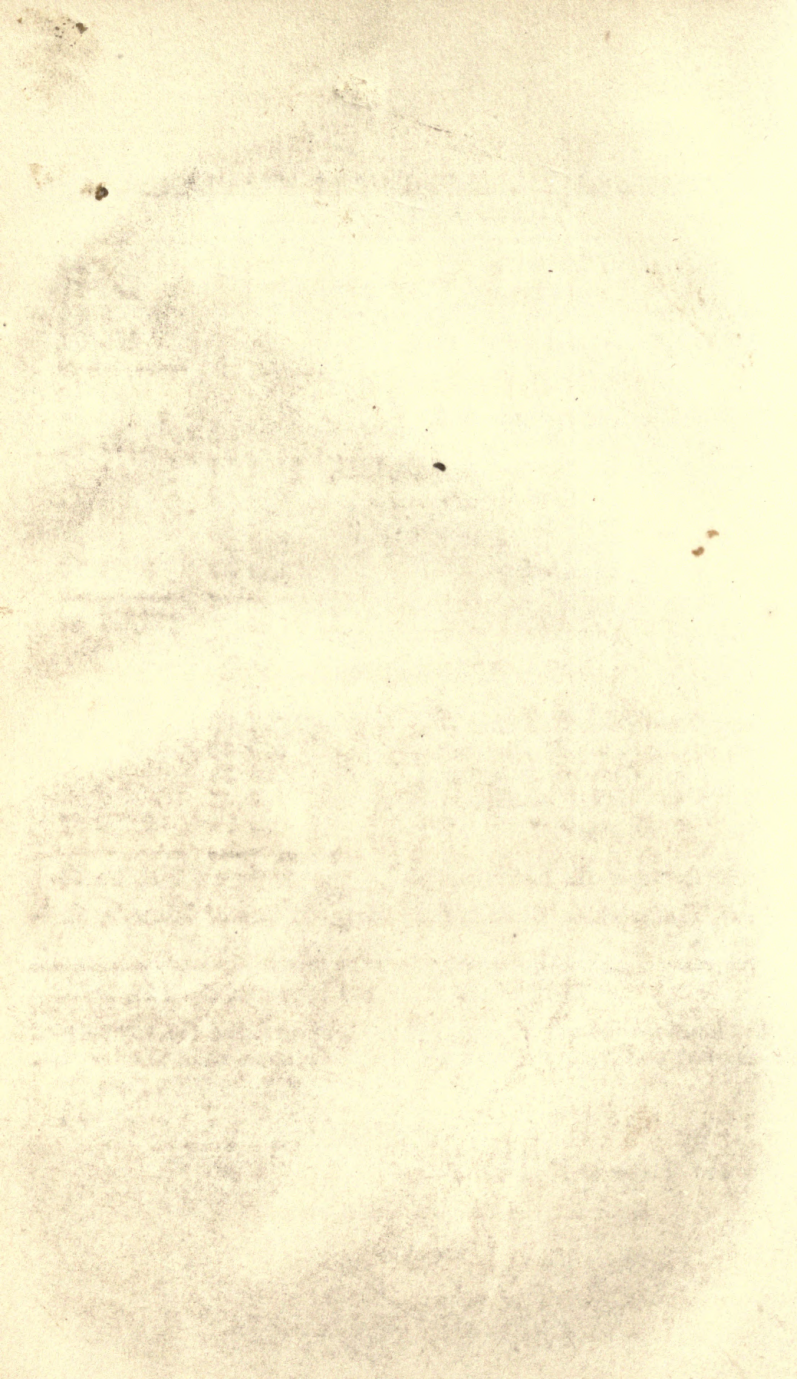
UC-NRLF



B 3 088 712







LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MARYLAND INSTITUTE

For the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts,

ON TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 20, 1855,

BY

HON. JOHN TYLER, OF VA.

EX-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

SUBJECT:

"The Prominent Characters and Incidents of our History from 1812 to 1836."

Published by order of the Institute.

BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN MURPHY & CO.

No. 178 MARKET STREET.

1855.

LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MARYLAND INSTITUTE

For the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts,

AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE

MANUFACTURES OF THE STATE.

BY JOHN TYLER, OF VIRGINIA.

IN PRESENCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

AND OF THE MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE,

ON THE 15TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1835.

THE LECTURE WAS OPENED BY THE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTE,

AND OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT,

AND OF THE SECRETARY.

THE LECTURE WAS

RECEIVED WITH GREAT INTEREST,

AND WAS

REMARKED UPON BY THE

MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE.

THE LECTURE WAS

REMARKED UPON BY THE

MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE.

THE LECTURE WAS

A D D R E S S .

Mr. President,

and Gentlemen of the Maryland Institute:

THE Institution over which you preside must enlist in its favor the warmest sympathies of every lover of humanity. Agriculture and the mechanic arts may be regarded as twin sisters, born at the same birth, and co-workers in all that relates to the good of man, his comfort, his refinement, his civilization. Without the first, the last has no active existence,—without the last, the earth is an unreclaimed wilderness, within whose dense forests no trace of improvement exists. Working perpetually together, they have their type in the Castor and Pollux of the ancient mythology. By their joint labors they reclaim the wilderness, cause the earth to give forth its blessings, build the populous city, construct the noble ship and freight it for distant ports, and make available in the great work of civilization, the primeval elements of fire, air and water. The curse pronounced upon our race, on the expulsion of our great progenitors from the garden, is almost annihilated through the substitution of manual labor by machinery, which seems often, in the complexity and yet perfect accuracy of its operations, to be endowed with the principles of life and motion as inherent in itself, and independent of the will of man. Nor does the genius which presides over the department of the mechanic arts, confine itself to the fabrication of mechanical instruments and machines devoted to the great purposes of every day life.

It springs forth into the boundless fields of the imagination—wings its flight through the mists of long past ages, and revivifies and restores through the magic touch of the brush, the pencil, and the chisel, the dust of the long since dead, and the images of things belonging to the past eternities. The Assyrian in the palaces of Nineveh—Belshazzar trembling at the handwriting on the wall—Alexander in his glorious triumphs, and drunken orgies—the Ptolemies in their royal robes, and Cleopatra “who lost Mark Anthony the world.” To say nothing of the sublime portraitures drawn from sacred sources, it connects the past with the present by exhibiting our own noble and god-like ancestors, along side of the liberty-loving men of other ages and of other climes, and crowns the whole with a halo of imperishable glory, by representing on the canvass George Washington of Virginia, surrendering his sword to the Congress at Annapolis, Maryland.

When therefore, gentlemen, you were good enough repeatedly to express the belief, that my presence here would contribute somewhat to the great objects of your institution, I resolved at all hazard of inconvenience to myself, to yield to your wishes. To the busy scenes of public life I have long since bid adieu—but I have not felt myself estranged from my species or my country, and therefore it would neither be decorous or becoming in me to refuse my aid, however small it may be, to any of the great purposes of social life. I felt also an especial obligation resting upon me to obey a call from the representatives of one of the great departments of industry of this State; not only because of her close and thorough identification with the State of my nativity, but because of peculiar claims of gratitude which she possesses on myself, individually. In reviewing the past of a life, not devoid of incidents, I class among the most imperishable of my obligations of gratitude, the fact that this time-honored State cast twice upon me her high suffrage for the second most exalted political office in the gift of the confederacy. If there existed no other reason for my presence here to night, this, I am sure, would be sufficient in itself.

I have selected as the subject of my address, a sketch of some of the most prominent characters and incidents of our

history from 1812 to 1836. I do this not only in compliance with the expressed wish that my lecture should be devoted to the subject of cotemporaneous history, but in obedience to the suggestions of my own feelings. There is nothing that so pleasingly fills the mind as those scenes in which we were engaged when life was young, and nothing which more engrosses the heart, than the great and distinguished men with whom it has been our good fortune to become acquainted in our progress through life. Youth has its pleasures in the present, but age lives in the past—youth is full of hope, and springs forth like the racer in the Olympic games. Age, on the contrary, builds a shrine to memory, and there it delights chiefly to worship. From these remarks you will readily deduce the conclusion that my purpose is rather to speak of the dead, than of the living. Of the latter I shall in fact say nothing—nor do I propose to myself the invidious task of tracing acts to motives. In this last particular there is nothing which is so well calculated to impair the value and intrinsic merits of cotemporaneous history. There are so many motives at work, even unconsciously sometimes, and such a whirlwind of passion prevailing amid the party struggles of the day, that even the very best of men may be deceived as to the motives of others, and the pencil may be made to give forth what purports to be true impersonations, but which are either wretched caricatures, or something still more revolting and offensive. So it has happened that men whose every thought was devoted to the public good, have been for the time being regarded as plotters of mischief, and as absorbed only in selfish and detestable schemes of ambition. The history of the world is replete with instances of this, and the true characters of many whose names have been visited through centuries with the greatest obloquy, and who have been looked upon by successive generations with loathing and contempt, are but now beginning to break “the cerements of the tomb,” and to win that justice which ages have denied them. In illustration of this, we need go to no other history than that of England. The noble patriots who opposed the arbitrary exactions of Charles the first, have been denounced as rebels and traitors, and their names branded by historians and poets—and yet at this day the inscription on the tomb of

Bradshaw, of "resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," is written on the heart of every freeman. How loud and unceasing were the denunciations heaped upon the name of Oliver Cromwell by cotemporary historians: and yet that man, reviled by historians, and by poets "damned to everlasting fame," now that the mist is rolling away, and his true motives and character come to be developed, begins to be regarded, if he is not already so, as among the foremost of England's greatest warriors and statesmen—as one whose iron-hearted courage was not more conspicuous on the field of Naseby, than was his policy as protector of England in increasing her wealth, her power and renown. A few more touches from the pen of Carlyle, and the shade which has heretofore enveloped his name will have passed away forever. If it be a fact, as I have seen it stated, that he has been denied a place among the sovereigns of England in the adornments of the new parliament house, that very circumstance will lead to wider enquiry and broader examination. As did the absence from the public procession through the streets of Rome, of the statues of Brutus and Cassius in the time of Augustus, cause universal remark and commentary, so the vacant panel on which should be exhibited the features of the great commander and protector of the commonwealth of England, will be gazed upon until "Old Noll," such as he was in life, shall become familiar in every feature to the lover of liberty and the hater of tyranny. Other illustrious examples might be cited, of those condemned by cotemporaneous history, who in after times have challenged the admiration of the world. It becomes at length to be questioned whether even crooked-back Richard, who on the mimic boards we have so often seen disturbed in his sleep before the day of Bosworth field, by the spectres of those he is charged with having murdered—and whose agony and despair and death, we have so often hailed with loud acclaim, was the accursed and hateful wretch which his cotemporaries have represented him to be. Court had to be paid to Richmond, and the throne preserved in the line of his descendants; and the readiest mode of accomplishing both these ends, was to pile obloquy on the name of his most formidable rival, until all should unite in pronouncing Henry VII the rightful wearer of the crown. Nor

had these motives ceased to exist in the time of Shakespeare. A Tudor in the person of Elizabeth sat upon the throne—and the great dramatic poet felt it to be no disparagement to himself to delineate the character of a consummate hypocrite and tyrant in the person of Richard, while Harry VIII, steeped in the innocent blood of his almost numberless wives, should be exhibited on the stage as a ruler of iron will, and of inflexible justice. I shall then leave to the historian the task of deducing motives from the acts of which I may briefly speak, and in delineating the actor, if I cannot praise I shall not condemn. Fortunately there is but little cause for personal censure for all the period through which I shall hastily glance. Of what transpired subsequent to 1836, I will not trust myself to speak. Let that be the task of others—a task which I trust will not be performed until all passion and all feeling shall have passed away and been forgotten—then let the arm of justice be bared, and its sword fall upon the heads that may deserve the blow.

The antecedents to the war of 1812 had greatly excited the public mind, and called forth men of high and cultivated talents from all parts of the country, to take their share in the great responsibilities engendered by the times. There was an uprising of the masses against the lawless aggressions committed on the commerce and persons of our citizens by two of the great belligerents, the clash of whose arms resounded all over the world. The contest for supremacy prevailed over ocean and over land; and while the bloody encounters at Trafalgar and the Nile, had caused the flag of England to float in triumph over the water, the heavy tramp of the victorious cohorts of France were heard amid the pyramids of Egypt and the sands of the desert, and shortly after, on the distant plains of Europe. Each warred on neutral rights, and both had given abundant cause of displeasure to the United States. From France we experienced all the evils arising from a violation of all the laws regulating blockade—while our ships upon the high seas were seized by British cruisers and condemned, and confiscated by British courts of admiralty, by virtue of false and despotic interpolations on the national code. Nor did the grievance stop here. She claimed and exercised the right to search our ships on the high seas, and seizing upon their sailors, under the stale and

now, as I hope, obsolete pretext, that "once a subject always a subject," forced not only naturalized citizens, but native born Americans, either to serve on board her public ships, or be incarcerated in gloomy dungeons. Every expedient had been resorted to by those entrusted with the management of public affairs to avoid a resort to arms. Measures of a questionable character on the score of sound policy, but proceeding from an anxious and praise-worthy desire to preserve the public peace, had been resorted to by the government, but as in the days preceding the revolutionary war, every overture and demonstration on our part was met by renewed and aggravated insult and wrong—and nothing remained but a resort to the sword. With a gallantry characteristic of Americans, they selected as their antagonist that nation, which because of her supremacy on the ocean, was the strongest and most formidable. On the stirring incidents which followed, it is not necessary to dwell. Our gallant navy, which had been ridiculed on the floor of Parliament, as consisting of a few cock-boats with bits of striped bunting floating at their mast-heads, illumined the ocean and the lakes with their victories, and inflicted a terrible retribution on the commerce of the enemy—while the war on land, which had been prosecuted with varied success, was closed by two brilliant achievements, the one at North Point in sight of this city, where untrained valor triumphed over disciplined regiments—and the other at New Orleans, under the lead of that great captain who never knew defeat, either on the field of battle or in personal conflict. I remember well the intensity of interest amounting almost to agony, which pervaded the State of Virginia, when after having achieved almost a bloodless victory in the capture of the Federal City, the proud and haughty enemy, led on by a bold and spirited leader, turned his arms against this city, the commercial emporium of the south. Virginia remembered the days of the revolution, when her battalions had contested on many a hard fought field, with those of Maryland, for the palm of glory. Her troops, led on by one of the most gallant of her sons, hastened to the expected scene of action, and occupying the position assigned them, stood ready to conquer or die by the side of their gallant brothers. General John Pegram, their commander, was the

impersonation of valor and patriotism. There beat in his heart an undying love of country and of glory, and if the brave troops of Maryland had not terminated the day, at an early hour, by the death of the commander of the British troops, I hazard nothing in saying that the graphic sketch, by Shakspeare, of the death of the Duke of York and the noble Earl of Suffolk on the field of Agincourt, would have been realized by many a Marylander and Virginian.

“Suffolk first died, and York all haggled over,
Comes to him where in gore he lay insteep'd,
And takes him by the beard; kisses the gashes
That bloodily did yawn upon his face,
And cries aloud—‘Tarry dear Cousin Suffolk,
My soul shall thine keep company to heaven—
Tarry sweet soul for mine, then fly abreast
As in this glorious and well-foughten field
We kept together in our chivalry.’”

The battle of New Orleans closed the war amid a blaze of glory, and the proclamation of peace, which soon after followed, filled the country with joy. The bloody field of Waterloo had been fought and won, and peace once more revisited the world.

The transition from a state of war to one of peace, which brings so many blessings in its train to the country, nevertheless devolves upon Government no easy task. The reduction of every thing to a peace establishment, involving of necessity the throwing out of employment vast numbers of persons; the task of discriminating between the equally meritorious in the selection for continued service; the apportioning the Government expenditures among different branches of service; the abolishing certain taxes and the modification of others to suit a period of peace, and at the same time the making provision to redeem the heavy debts which a war with a power so formidable as Great Britain necessarily superinduces, are all matters of the greatest moment, and at the same time of great difficulty. Talent of the highest order was quite as necessary for this work as for a vigorous prosecution of the war, and the fourteenth Congress was composed very much of the same men as had distinguished themselves in the stirring and exciting debates which had occurred as well before as after the war had been declared. The House of Representatives was a model as-

sembly for order, in all its proceedings. A sound from the speaker's hammer brought it to order in the midst of excitement, and the ascription of an improper motive to a member, or to a co-ordinate department, was immediately rebuked, and the decorum of the House vindicated. I do not mean to say that the debates were not often characterized by much warmth—on the contrary, there was no restraint imposed on the freest and fullest canvass of measures; but, in the very storm and whirlwind of passion, there was no forgetfulness when a co-ordinate department of the Government was assailed, or the opinions expressed by a member in debate came to be answered, of what was due on the score of courtesy to the one or the other. The weapons of wit and ridicule were often resorted to, but then those weapons were of “the ice brook temper,” of a keen and polished edge, such as gentlemen might use for attack or defence, and contrasted favorably with the broad-axe or double-handled sword, which inflict hideous wounds, and degrade the combatants as well as the public assembly to which they may belong. Langdon Cheves, of South Carolina, had filled the speaker's chair of the preceding Congress with a dignity and intellect which, while it won for him the respect and admiration of all, caused a general regret that one so well calculated to illustrate and adorn any station under the Government, should have voluntarily abandoned its service and sought—probably with true wisdom—the calm and repose of more retired life. Over that House, at the time to which I refer, presided one who seemed formed for the station and the station made for him. To commanding talents he united an urbanity, with a decision of character, which commanded the respect of the House, and awed into subjection to rule, the most refractory. He had enlarged his reputation by brilliant efforts on the floor of both Houses of Congress, and his speakership may properly be referred to, as a period when to have held a seat in the House of Representatives constituted an epoch in any man's life. That man was Henry Clay. Let me speak of him in a manner worthy of myself and just to him. He had received the impress in early life of the fervid and glowing eloquence of Mr. Henry, and had profited greatly by it. He was a conspicuous leader of the republican hosts that had

elevated first Mr. Jefferson, and afterwards Mr. Madison to the Presidency, and his voice sounded as a clarion in the ears of their adversaries. Nature had bestowed upon him in profusion her gifts. He added to an intellect of the highest order a commanding person, and his voice, and gesture, and manner were those best calculated to sway the action of a popular assembly. Had he lived in the time of Pericles his name would have found a place of high eminence in Athenian history. On the floor of that House were to be found, contesting the leadership with Mr. Clay and rivalling him in public confidence, John C. Calhoun and William Lowndes, both of South Carolina, and amongst the most eminent men that the age produced. The power of condensation of the first in expressing his ideas, which was almost as great as that of a lens by which all the rays of light are brought to a focus, was equalled by the vast range of information possessed by the other, which caused him to be regarded as the Mentor of the House; and no man listened to him without obtaining new views and a more enlarged understanding of the subject under discussion. Mr. Calhoun was early called to the head of the War Department, and the great ability he displayed in that office is well known to the country. He brought order out of chaos, and presenting and preserving the outlines of his system, so arranged them, that recruits in case of war have only to muster into line and the army is complete. As a debater and writer he had but few, if any, superiors. In both departments his conclusions were drawn from a course of reasoning so logical and precise, that it was almost impossible to strike out a sentence without destroying the symmetry of the whole production. At a much later period of his life I had occasion fully to appreciate the power of his mind in the great aid he rendered in a high department of the Government.

William Lowndes soon after fell a victim to a relentless disease, but not until he had left in the law establishing the sinking fund, a monument which will speak to future ages of consummate ability and statesmanship. He wanted the adventitious advantages of grace of person and of manners, and yet he was the most engaging of men. He passed away from earth at the time that the most brilliant prospects of political

elevation were opening upon him. Daniel Webster, then a representative of a district from New Hampshire, had already made a deep impression upon the public mind—but that broad and expansive intellect had at the moment but little room for display, as it was engaged in sustaining a cause which at the time had sunk into a hopeless minority. At an after day its full volume was exhibited, and drew upon him the eyes of the civilized world. It may truly be said of him that at the forum he had but few co-rivals. He wore his senatorial cloak with a dignity never surpassed; and upon his transfer to the State Department, the coat of diplomacy was so admirably fitted and adjusted to his person, that it seemed destined from the first for his especial wearing. John Randolph was also there, blazing like a comet through the heavens and throwing off scintillations of wit and genius, until his course in debate was paved with stars. How often has he been seen to enter the house booted and spurred, and with his riding whip in his hand, just at the moment that the Speaker had stated the question for the decision of the House, after a three weeks' discussion, when his penetrating voice would arrest the vote by the enquiry,—“What is the question, Mr. Speaker?” and while the speaker would be restating the question, would advance to his desk and reopen the discussion by one of those brilliant speeches which would electrify the House and revive its exhausted energies. In that House you would also have seen men, constituting a galaxy in themselves, who would justly have held a high place in any assembly upon earth. General Sam. Smith, of Maryland, with his varied stores of mercantile knowledge, to instruct the House in all that related to commerce; Governor Wright, the representative of the chivalry and patriotism of the same State; John Forsyth, of Georgia, who performed in after life so distinguished a part; Mr. Grovesnor, of New York, who wore in off-hand debate the most polished armor; Hopkinson, of Pennsylvania, the author of our national air, who, to refinement of mind, added the accomplishments of the gentleman; Gaston, of North Carolina, whose memory is precious in the recollections of the State that gave him birth; the chivalrous Richard M. Johnson, of Kentucky, whose “many scars” attested his bravery and patriotism; Henry St. George Tucker, Philip P.

Barbour, and Daniel Sheffey, of Virginia, each distinguished for a logical acumen in debate rarely ever surpassed; and there too was Timothy Pickering, who carried you back to the days of the elder Adams; and Pitkin, from Connecticut, ready upon all questions involving statistical knowledge. Time is not allowed me to dwell on their respective merits, or to enumerate others—some of whom are still living—whose names will find honorable mention in history. Such was the House of Representatives of the fourteenth Congress, and such the men who composed it. Its second session was held during the last winter of Mr. Madison's presidential term, and the fourth of March ensuing witnessed the inauguration of a new era in the installation of Mr. Monroe. He had been elected by universal acclamation,—and if a self-sacrificing devotion to the public good ever entitled any man to that high honor, Mr. Monroe richly deserved it. At a most critical period of the war he had the double duty of Secretary of State and Secretary of War to encounter, and his labors were truly herculean. By day and by night, at all and every hour, that admirable patriot was to be found in his office, despatching troops and supplies to exposed points, digesting plans for military operations, or pouring over army returns; and still he knew no rest until the sound of the victorious cannon at New Orleans gave assurance that the last battle had been fought and won. The unanimity with which he was elected to the Presidency, gave proof that the party struggles which had so long divided public sentiment were all the same as ended. Those contests which had lasted so many years, between the Federal and Republican parties, might well be termed the war of the giants. Beginning under the lead of Jefferson and Hamilton, on opposite sides, other leaders of nearly equal talents had arisen from time to time to lead on the embattled hosts; and the onslaught between them during the war with Great Britain, had reached its acme of violence. The banner of the Federal party, which had so long floated in gallant but doubtful contests, went down, and that of its opponent waved in undisputed triumph. The great error of the Federal party was in its opposition to the war, which, undertaken in maintenance of the honor of the country, had enlisted in its support the great body of the people. The appeal

was made to the spirit of an indignant patriotism, and that appeal vibrated in every vein and beat in every artery. Canute the Great bade the sea at its flood retire from his feet, and Xerxes scourged the Hellespont and threw chains into it to still its waves and fetter the flow of its waters,—and yet the sea advanced, and the billows lifted their white caps to the clouds, and the waters rushed on upon their way, as if in mockery of the puny efforts made to enchain them; and so was it with public sentiment in that memorable war.

The calm which had succeeded the storm was not of long continuance. Peace has its excitements as well as war, and the questions continually arising soon engendered opposing opinions, and gave birth to opposite factions; but up to 1819 every conflict of opinion had resolved itself into a question of policy or elementary principle. Nothing had arisen to disturb the repose of the sections. All at once, however, there had arisen a cloud of terrific import. That division of the country into sectional parties, to which every lover of his country had looked with fear and apprehension, had for the first time in our history arisen. Missouri, having attained maturity, asked for admission into the Union as an independent State. She was met by attempts to restrain her free and sovereign will, and to force upon her a system of internal police, at war with her domestic institutions. The alarm bell, as Mr. Jefferson expressed it, had sounded, and the sections stood in array facing each other. From 1819 to 1821 the Missouri question, as it was called, occupied all thoughts, and an excitement indescribably great often prevailed in the House of Representatives. Most of the old members of 1816 had gone into retirement; Clay and Randolph still remained, and General Wm. Henry Harrison—with the laurels he had won at the Thames and elsewhere blooming then fresh upon his brow—had become a member. His advocacy of THE RIGHT in regard to all the States, consigned him, upon the expiration of the Congress to which he had been elected, to a temporary ostracism;—so blind to all light and so deaf to the expostulations of wisdom is the eye and ear of faction in its mad rage. The Senate had undergone corresponding changes. Maryland was at the time represented by two men who would have done honor to the

proudest State in any age of the world; they were William Pinkney and Edward Lloyd. The first, classical in style and manner, magnificent in rhetoric and resistless in logic—the last, stern and inflexible in his principles, noble and generous in his bearing; and, while too honest to conceal an indignant sense of wrong, mild, conciliating and tranquil in the midst of excitement. The discussion which had sprung up in the Senate on the Missouri question called upon Mr. Pinkney for a full display of all those wonderful talents he was known to possess. After a protracted debate, in which most of the Senators had joined—among whom was Rufus King, whose exalted character dignified the station which he filled, and whose advocacy of the Missouri restriction gave additional and weighty sanction to a great wrong—Mr. Pinkney announced his purpose to reply. The scene which the Senate chamber presented the day on which he addressed the Senate, is not to be forgotten by one who had the good fortune to look upon it. The exciting theme, united to the fame of the orator, had caused an immense crowd to repair to the Capitol at an early hour, and every seat in the Senate chamber was occupied before the hour for the meeting of the Senate had arrived, and the body of the chamber was overflowed by those who were permitted to fill all the avenues between the seats of the Senators. I remember the exultation of the southern and southwestern members in that triumphant vindication of truth and justice, and it added no little to the measure of gratification that the championship of equality among the States, as joint partners in all belonging to the Union, should thus have been assumed through its Senators by the State of Maryland. The effort of that day entitled Mr. Pinkney to be ranked among the greatest debaters and most eminent orators who had in any age appeared upon the stage of public affairs. The only regret experienced was, that a speech so brilliant in eloquence and conclusive in argument, should not have been perpetuated, either by a stenographer or by the pen of the distinguished senator himself. The Missouri question, it is well known, was settled by the demarkation of a line beyond which the most important article of southern property should not be carried; and that law was passed over the heads and against the votes of fully nine-tenths of the southern delega-

tions. I mean not to venture into the political discussions of this day; I have no denunciations to utter, no complaints to make; but I shall be permitted to say, that however impolitic and unjust at the time may have been the proceeding, it is a subject perhaps now to be regretted—in view of what has occurred since—that that line should not then have been made universal in its application to all the territory then possessed or at any future day to be acquired by the United States. Its observance in good faith on all sides would have been the harbinger of peace.

Time is not allowed me to dwell on the interesting incidents that transpired between 1821 and the installation of General Jackson into the Presidency in 1827. Having been foiled in his efforts to reach that office by the vote of the House of Representatives, which elevated Mr. Adams over him, he led on the assaults against the administration without allowing it a moment of breathing time, and so unceasingly continued them, that by the expiration of the term, Mr. Adams' administration was entirely prostrate, and General Jackson was borne into the Presidency on the shoulders of the people. Of that extraordinary man it seems hardly necessary for me further to speak. His character and actions are indelibly engraven on the public memory. Suffice it at present to say that his first four years glided on in comparative peace; the national republican party, as it was called, were his chief opponents, and his re-election to the Presidency was accomplished by so overwhelming a majority as nearly to have annihilated the opposition. He had been brought into power and sustained for the second term by what was known as the State Rights party, but occurrences were already in progress which were calculated to change all the sympathies of that party for the administration. It had stood in a phalanx of about fifteen, in the Senate, on all questions of elementary principle. If a measure passed the two houses against its united vote in the Senate, and met with the veto of the President, as several did, the action of the President was hailed with unbounded delight, and the two houses of Congress resounded with his praises. But it was destined to receive a blow which threatened for the time to prostrate forever their long cherished principles. You all remember, gentlemen,

the agitation of the public mind before and at the time of the issuing of the celebrated proclamation, arising out of the proceedings of South Carolina, through her constituted organs. The discussion in the Senate between the talented Senators from South Carolina and Massachusetts—R. Y. Hayne and Daniel Webster—which is familiar even now to all the school-boys of the land, had preceded by some time the date of that celebrated State paper, and when the proclamation came afterwards to be thrown into the scale of that debate, on the side of the Senator from Massachusetts, South Carolina seemed to be left altogether alone to the mercy of her opponents. And yet she had done no more than issue a threat to nullify the law of Congress, commonly called the tariff law. That threat in those times, however, was enough to induce Congress to invest the President with dictatorial power; the entire public treasury was placed at his disposal, together with all the military and naval forces of the country. Such was at that day the professed love of the Constitution, such the avowed sentiment of obedience to a law of Congress, that the Proclamation and Force bill—as the law to enforce South Carolina to obedience was called—was received with one universal acclaim throughout the entire region of what were then known as the tariff and non-slaveholding States. South Carolina looked upon their proceedings with anxiety, but apparently without fear. She seemed to be preparing herself for the crisis, with a fixed determination to maintain her position and to run all hazards. Her 12,000 volunteers were constantly drilled under the eye of her gallant Governor, and the port and bearing of her Representatives in both Houses of Congress was lofty and erect. In the meantime the guns of Castle Pinkney, built for the protection of Charleston, were pointed at the city, and General Winfield Scott, that great commander of brigade, then a General, was placed in command of the military district. The Southern States became deeply and painfully moved at the prospect of not only the subjugation but virtual annihilation of one of its cluster of States. Those States disapproved the course of South Carolina, but they regarded the foundation principles of the Government as subverted by the proclamation, and the high tariff system was equally obnoxious to them as

to South Carolina. They had as strongly protested against that system as tyrannical, unjust, and oppressive. There was at that moment in the gubernatorial chair of Virginia as noble-minded and fearless a man as ever presided over the destinies of a State. He had served many years in Congress with distinguished honor, and sympathized strongly with the opponents of the protective system. If John Floyd had been required to level the bayonets of Virginia at the heart of South Carolina, his course would have been marked by a seriousness and gravity worthy the occasion. Nor was South Carolina altogether so powerless as she seemed to be esteemed at the moment. No man can foretell the results of a great revolution such as an armed invading force may produce. There is something in an independent flag on the outbreak of civil war which attracts supporters, and volunteers might and most probably would have flocked to Charleston upon the first movement of a Federal army under the President. A darker cloud never rested over the Union than on the night of the passage of the Force bill. Such was my opinion then and such it continues to be. At that moment there was nothing visible to the touch but the drawn sword. A crisis in public affairs had actually arrived, and I thought then and still believe that there was but one man in Congress who possessed the power to avert civil war; and I will not through a mawkish sensibility withhold the fact that whatsoever of influence I possessed was exerted to induce that distinguished man, then a senator, to step forward and heal the discontents of the country. Right nobly did he enter upon the task, and meeting a corresponding temper and feeling on the part of Mr. Calhoun, then also a senator, the plan of pacification was promptly adjusted. And now I will say, notwithstanding all that may have transpired since which is calculated to impair my friendly regard for his memory and to diminish my esteem for him as a politician, that amid all the brilliant career of Mr. Clay, the great monument to his fame is to be found in the Compromise Bill of the tariff, which through his great influence grew suddenly into a law. It was the oil which, poured upon the waters, stilled their agitation—the olive branch substituted for the sword—the dove which went out over the sea of passion, and returned with assurances of

harmony and safety. I well remember the electric light of joy which beamed upon the countenances of all when he rose in the Senate to announce his purpose to present his bill. The House of Representatives, which had been torpid before, suddenly awoke into action;—plan upon plan of compromise or modification of what were considered the obnoxious features of the tariff laws, all inefficient and unsatisfactory, were offered at the speaker's table. For a moment Mr. Clay paused in his course; he adverted to the feeling manifested in the House, and expressed his preference to be, to permit others to take the lead in the matter; but yielded to an earnest remonstrance against inertness on his part, and happily for his own fame and the good of the country, brought forward his great measure of pacification. That measure encountered the objection in the Senate that it was a money bill and could not originate in that body, to avoid which Mr. Letcher, late Governor of Kentucky, was advised to take a copy of the bill and move it in substitution of all the schemes before the House. This he did, with the approbation of its mover, and it required only a few hours to pass it through the House, and coming to the Senate soon it grew into a law. Thus happily terminated a contest which was near bringing on a civil war; men who had almost held their breath for weeks before now breathed freely and easily. The sword which had been pointed at the heart of South Carolina was returned to its scabbard; and the proud Palmetto flag which in days of yore had been supported by the valor of Marion, of Pickens, and of Sumpter, still floated over a free and independent State. At another day that same flag, as it waved in full glory over the plains of Mexico, caught the gaze of an admiring world, and impressed as I trust upon the heart and mind of America the principle that, in differences of opinion that may and will spring up between the States, the last counselor should be the pride of power and the last mediator should be force. A government originating in compromise can only be maintained by compromise.

To this rapidly succeeded contests in which great minds were engaged on either side in hostile array. That man of iron will still held the reins of Government, and the war waged on his administration was fierce and bloody. In the House of Re-

presentatives was heard, in loud denunciation, the eloquent voice of George McDuffie, which was re-echoed from the Senate in deeper and more prolonged tones by Clay, Webster and Calhoun, each of whom in himself had power to stir up a continent—and yet there sat General Jackson in the chair of State, as tranquilly and unmoved as if no storm raged without, and all was sunshine around him. He had performed a tour through the northern and eastern States, and measuring his popularity by the vast crowds which hailed his presence at every stage of his journey, he resolved upon a measure which for a moment caused the greatest alarm and dismay among his most steadfast friends. In order to accomplish that measure he removed one secretary who differed, and appointed another who concurred with him in opinion. The lightning flashed and the thunders rolled, in and out of Congress, and yet nothing moved his stern resolve. Sustained by his newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury, who with a purpose as firm and resolute as his own, with a temper less liable to be disturbed by outbreaks of passion, and who resolved all questions by referring them to the ordeal of reason, he bade defiance to the storm which raged around him. And now let me do an act of justice to myself, on this the first occasion which has ever presented itself, in regard to the part I bore on the nomination of that distinguished secretary. I possessed at the time no personal acquaintance with him, and should not have known him had I met him in the street. Had I then known him as I have since, in his exalted office of Chief Justice of the United States, maugre any discrepancy of opinion which might have existed between us, there was no office, however exalted, either in the gift of the executive or the people, for which I would not promptly have sustained him. I am forbidden to speak in praise of the living, and content myself with this explanation.

Andrew Jackson was an extraordinary man. Possessing no varied stores of knowledge derived from books, and reared amid the hardships and perils of frontier life, there was yet no station which by the popular suffrage he was called upon to fill, that he did not dignify and adorn. As a legislator, he was at all times the advocate of the rights of his constituents;—as a judge, although not deeply read in the black letter of Lord Coke, and

guided chiefly by his moral sense, he gave in his decisions general satisfaction;—as a General, without the advantages of a military education, he encountered and overthrew with untrained militia, veteran Generals trained to arms from early youth, and commanding soldiers who had been conquerors in a hundred battles; and as President of the United States, he triumphed over an opposition amongst the most formidable that any politician ever encountered. Of his measures, or of the fruit which they have borne, it is not my purpose to speak. I shall be permitted to say, however, that “after life’s fitful fever he sleeps well,” occupying as he does deservedly a large space in the memory of the country.

I should not have fulfilled my whole task if I failed to introduce upon the canvass on which I have, as I fear, confusedly crowded men and things, the name of another who bore no inconsiderable part in the exciting scenes of General Jackson’s administration. For the greater portion of the time that he presided over a great monied institution, his smile was courted, his frown deprecated, and his opinion possessed on ’change. Oracular power! His fiat regulated the exchanges of the country—and all other institutions of a similar character were subordinate to his will. Nicholas Biddle was for much of his time appropriately called the great money-king. But time is allotted to all, and so it was to him. He sought to prolong the existence of the institution over which he presided after its fate had been decided, and its ultimate end was disastrous and overwhelming. It is not this, nor the denunciations which visited his name, nor is it the forgetfulness in which he sleeps at his own Andalusia, that shall prevent me from speaking of him, and in becoming terms. In 1819 I saw him for the first time; he was then in private life. He had accompanied Mr. Pinkney on his mission to Europe, and had but recently returned. To extensive reading, he had added the advantages of travel and observation, and Pennsylvania might well have looked upon her son with anticipated pride. Whether you regarded the wide range of his information, the classical eloquence of his conversation, or the accomplishments of his person or manners, you were compelled to admit that he was no ordinary man.

The time, most probably, has not yet come for writing his epitaph.

These great *athletæ*, of whom it has been my pleasure to speak, have now all passed away, and but few of their associates survive. The will which controlled—the eloquence which stirred up men's blood—the logic which constrained the judgment—the learning which enlightened and the wit which enlivened debate, have all descended with their possessors to the grave—but still they freshly live in our recollection, while their deeds have become matters of history; and to that great ordeal I leave them, which canvasses motives as well as words and actions.

During the period within which I have circumscribed my remarks, how great has been the change in the condition of our country. When we compare the population of 1812 with that of 1855; when we look to the table of exports and imports for the respective periods; when we count the number of our merchant ships, and look to the growth of our cities; when we behold the development of the mechanic arts, and the great multiplication of the products of the soil; and when, in addition to all this, we survey the vast expansion of our territory, what true American heart does not beat with a pride and pleasure inestimably great, and a love of country without limit and without bounds. In 1812, our population was less than 7,500,000—in 1855, it may be stated at 27,000,000. In 1812 we counted seventeen states and seven territories—in 1855 there are thirty-one states and nine territories; while the area of the United States and their territories have increased from 820,628 square miles, at the date of the government, to within a fraction of 3,000,000 in 1855. Such are some of the mighty changes we have undergone in a period of forty odd years. Rome in her day of power claimed to be the mistress of the world, and Alexander wept that he had no more worlds to conquer; and yet neither the one or the other looked down from their height of power upon possessions more extensive, or more fertile, than those which we enjoy. I mention these things not in a spirit of vain boasting, but for a far different and more interesting purpose;—it is to induce a still deeper impression of love and

veneration for our political institutions, by exhibiting our country as it was, and is, and will be, if we are true to the great trust committed to our hands. I listen to no raven-like croakings foretelling "disastrous twilight" to this confederacy. I will give no audience to those dark prophets who profess to foretell a dissolution of this Union. I would bid them back to their gloomy cells to await until the day shall come, which I trust will assuredly come, when this great Republic shall have reached the fullness of its glory. I will not adopt the belief that a people so favored by heaven, will most wickedly and foolishly "throw away a pearl richer than all their tribe." No;—when I open the books of the Sybils there is unfolded to my sight, in characters bright and resplendent, and glorious and vivifying, the American Confederacy in the distant future, shining with increased splendor,—the paragon of governments, the exemplar of the world. If I misinterpret the prophecies, let me live and die in my error. Let it rather be thus, than awaken me to an opposite reality, full of the horrid spectres of strong governments, sustained by bristling fortifications, large standing armies, heavy burthens on the shoulders of industry, the sword never at rest in its scabbard, and the ear deafened ever by the roar of cannon. No;—leave me for the remnant of my days the belief, that the government and institutions handed over to us by our fathers, is to be the rich legacy of our children, and our children's children, to the latest generation. If this be a delusion, let me still embrace it as a reality. Keep at a distance from me that gaunt and horrible form which is engendered in folly and nurtured in faction, and which slakes its thirst in the tears of the broken heart, and its appetite on the blasted hopes of mankind.

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LOAN DEPT.

This book is due on the last date stamped below, or
on the date to which renewed.

Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

22 Mar '82 JP

REC'D LD

APR 26 1962

FEB 14 1967 15

RECEIVED

MAR 9 '67 -4PM

LOAN DEPT.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

DEC 04 1989

UNIV. OF CALIF., BERK.

LD 21A-50m-8,'61
(C1795810)476B

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

72240

T1
M3

v. 4-8. 10, 12

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

